



Schools Serving for Social Justice

Stories of Inspiration Strategies for Implementation

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Corporation for National Service
National Service Fellowship Program

Schools Serving for Social Justice:
Stories of Inspiration, Strategies for Implementation

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Javiera Benavente



photo courtesy of Phillips Academy

INTRODUCTION

As you read these words, a recent immigrant in your community is studying for their citizenship exam in between sending their children off to school and catching a bus to work. And in Lawrence, Massachusetts, students from many nations practice Spanish as they partner with Dominican adults preparing for their naturalization exam.

As you read these words, pollutants from toxic waste are leaching into soil and water supplies somewhere in your state. In Ottawa County, Oklahoma, the Cherokee Volunteers reflect on the recent environmental justice conference that they sponsored for teachers, students, activists and scientists from across the nation.

As you read these words, in a high school somewhere across the nation a student is called “faggot” and pushed into a locker by a taunting classmate. But in St. Paul Minnesota, students design a banner to educate the school community about homophobia and respect for diversity.

In every rural town, suburban community, and urban center in this nation, incidents and infrastructures breed forms of prejudice and discrimination that impact the safety, human rights and quality of life of all members of a community. In every rural town, suburban community and urban center there are individuals and organizations committed to challenging injustice and affirming diversity in creative and powerful ways. Some of these stories are documented in this book. They are particularly inspiring because they are elicited from high schools across the country. As microcosms of our society, our nation's schools can, unfortunately perpetuate intolerance and institutionalized inequity. Or, they can, as illustrated by the models within, be vital centers where students and teachers expand their minds and hearts as they promote multicultural understanding and social justice while serving their communities.

Inside you will encounter eleven profiles of school-based initiatives that link service learning, social justice, and multicultural education. The profiles represent the voices of students, teachers, community members, parents, service recipients, administrators and agency members, their perspectives elicited through interviews and site visits. These diverse initiatives model service learning made meaningful through extensive preparation, curriculum integration, on-going reflection and youth leadership. As you turn the pages, you will travel to places like Panama City, Florida, Seattle, and Waterbury, Connecticut. You will visit Algebra, Spanish, and Television Production classes. You will learn about service learning that takes place within the school building, and service on a journey through the Mississippi Delta. As you hold the pages containing these stories in your hands, let them mingle in your mind and heart. Perhaps you will see your own community, students, or teaching style in one of them and be inspired to embark on a similar journey.

You are a high school teacher or teaching team, a guidance counselor or school social worker. Or maybe you are a student leader, community activist, parent, agency director, principal or superintendent, a police officer or a professor of teacher education. *Schools Serving for Social Justice* is designed with high school educators in mind, with the hope that many others will find it compelling and useful as well. You may be familiar with service learning, but unsure how or why to integrate a multicultural, social justice perspective. Or, you may have more experience in multicultural or social justice education and see service learning as charity oriented, or a mandatory requirement lacking social context. You may have little experience with either of these educational methodologies, but curious. Or perhaps you are well versed in both and want to know what other schools across the country are doing. Whoever you are, welcome.

A spectrum of approaches to integrating service learning with multicultural and social justice education is reflected in these profiles. Some initiatives celebrate diversity, others emphasize social change. Some projects last six weeks, others have continued for six years. The voices are African American from Madison and from Mississippi, Working Class white and the wealthy, First Nation and from many nations. Visualize the possibilities to be found without leaving the school or immediate neighborhood, or from forging partnerships that address global issues. Gain ideas from one class's efforts; contemplate school wide integration, or a district initiative. *Schools Serving for Social Justice* is designed to be used by school communities, to inspire possibilities for infusing service learning in the academic curriculum in order to promote multicultural and social justice education... but out-of-school time and agency-based programs may find it useful as well.

Schools Serving for Social Justice is intended to prompt, not offer a prescription for program and project design. Gain ideas and inspiration from the profiles, then utilize the connected questions and activities to sculpt service learning initiatives that:

Address authentic issues and needs

Engage the cultural knowledge of individuals and communities

Challenge all forms of bias and oppression

Bridge those diverse in race and culture

Explore multiple perspectives on social and environmental issues

Build critical thinking, creativity and leadership

Problem solve towards social change

Analyze power dynamics and foster reciprocity

Activate disenfranchised students and community members

Foster efficacy through socially conscious citizenship

Use this as a workbook to guide or supplement the evolution of a process. Adapt it in order to shape initiatives that meet the needs of your students, classroom, teaching style, and community. There is not one absolute way that a project must begin and unfold, although every process must start somewhere. And so at the beginning of this guide, you will find a **Service Learning Life Cycle** that depicts many of the **Elements** that contribute to the success and impact of a project. The hope is that all projects will, at some point, address all of these elements. Each element on the cycle is explored in more detail within this guide. Each section begins with at least one **Project Profile** that highlights an element in action, as well as diverse issues, settings, partnerships and curriculum integration approaches. These are followed by some **Key Considerations**, gleaned from the profiles. **Questions to Contemplate** and examples of **Activities** can aid your explorations of this element while planning a project or as it unfolds. There are some **Resources** and a place for you to add your own. Make the guide your own: scribble notes in margins, discuss profiles with peers, jot down important telephone numbers or spontaneous ideas.

Peruse the contents, maybe read all of the profiles, before exploring each section in more detail. The order in which the pieces are presented does not dictate their importance, nor that they must unfold in this order. For example, the section on youth voice appears midway through the guide, as does partnerships, but these should not be tagged on as afterthoughts. They are integral to a service learning process that promotes multicultural education and social justice. An exciting collaboration opportunity might provide impetus for a project; whereas in another case a specific incident or event in your school or community will warrant a response that could be met through a service learning initiative. Opportunities and needs, teaching and learning styles will help you define where to start on the cycle.

Look for allies in your school and community who will support your efforts through their time, energy, and conviction to the cause. They may be colleagues, school administrators and counselors, student groups such as a diversity committee, parents, or community leaders. Although no education is void of politics or values, be aware that someone may be waiting in the wings to critique your efforts as topics pertaining to multicultural and social justice issues can trigger deeply held emotions and notions. The profiles offer valuable insights and advice for structuring and validating service learning projects of this nature. Before and during the design and implementation of your project:

Reach out to colleagues and parents so they understand the nature of your project and how it meets goals of the academic curriculum.

Add validity to your projects by drawing connections to district and state curriculum standards that can be met through the initiative.

Review any safe school and anti-harassment policies in place in your region and frame your intention in relation to these.

Be sure that multiple perspectives on an issue are introduced, and that students have the opportunity to form their own opinions through critical analysis, and to articulate these.

Be attentive to how specific grants you may use to fund your project can and cannot be used (e.g., for lobbying or advocacy).

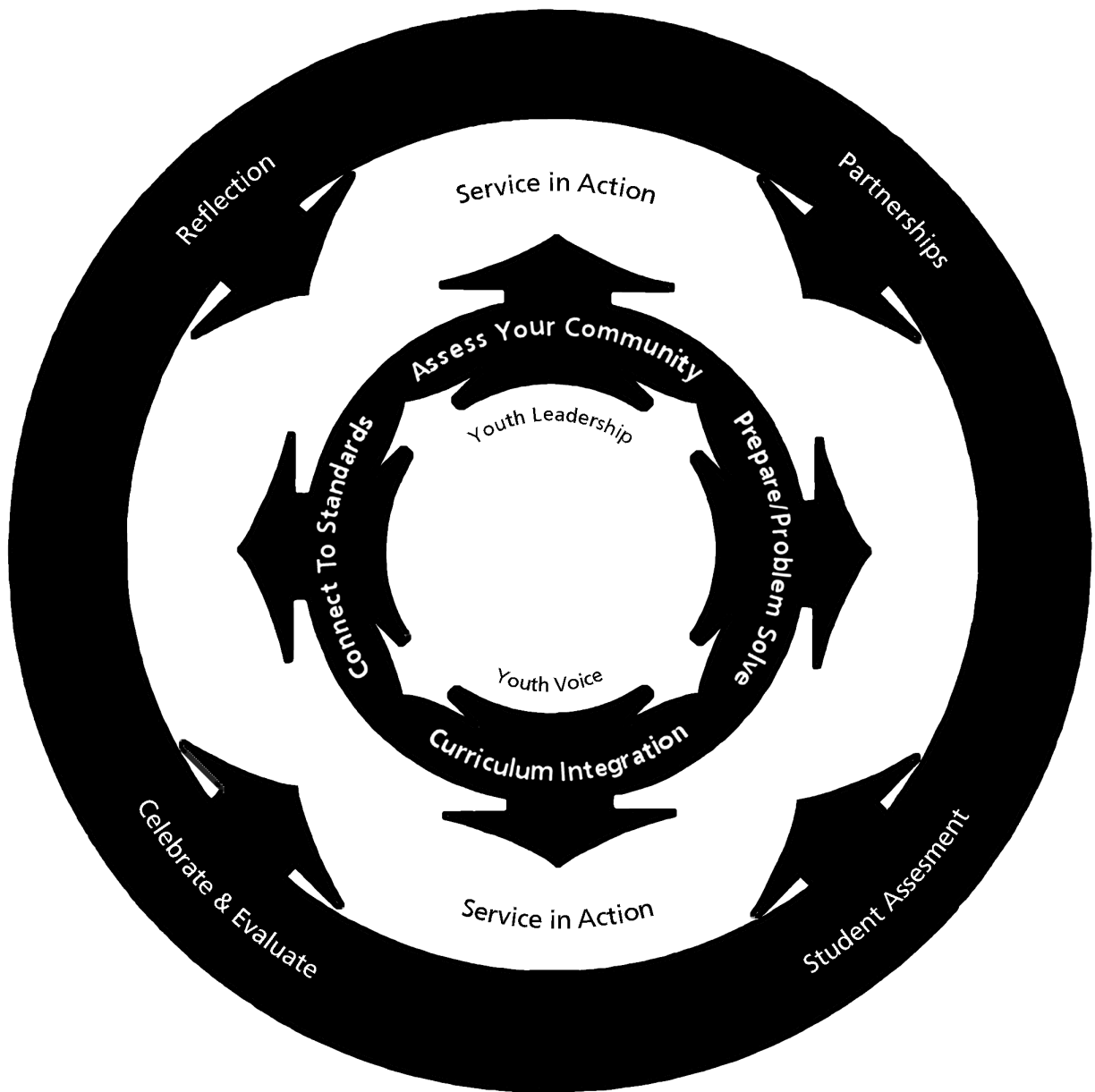
Choose manageable endeavors, gain satisfaction from the outcomes, then expand efforts, topics, and spheres of influence incrementally.

Know your comfort level in regards to the issues at hand (and consider challenging yourself to go a little beyond it).

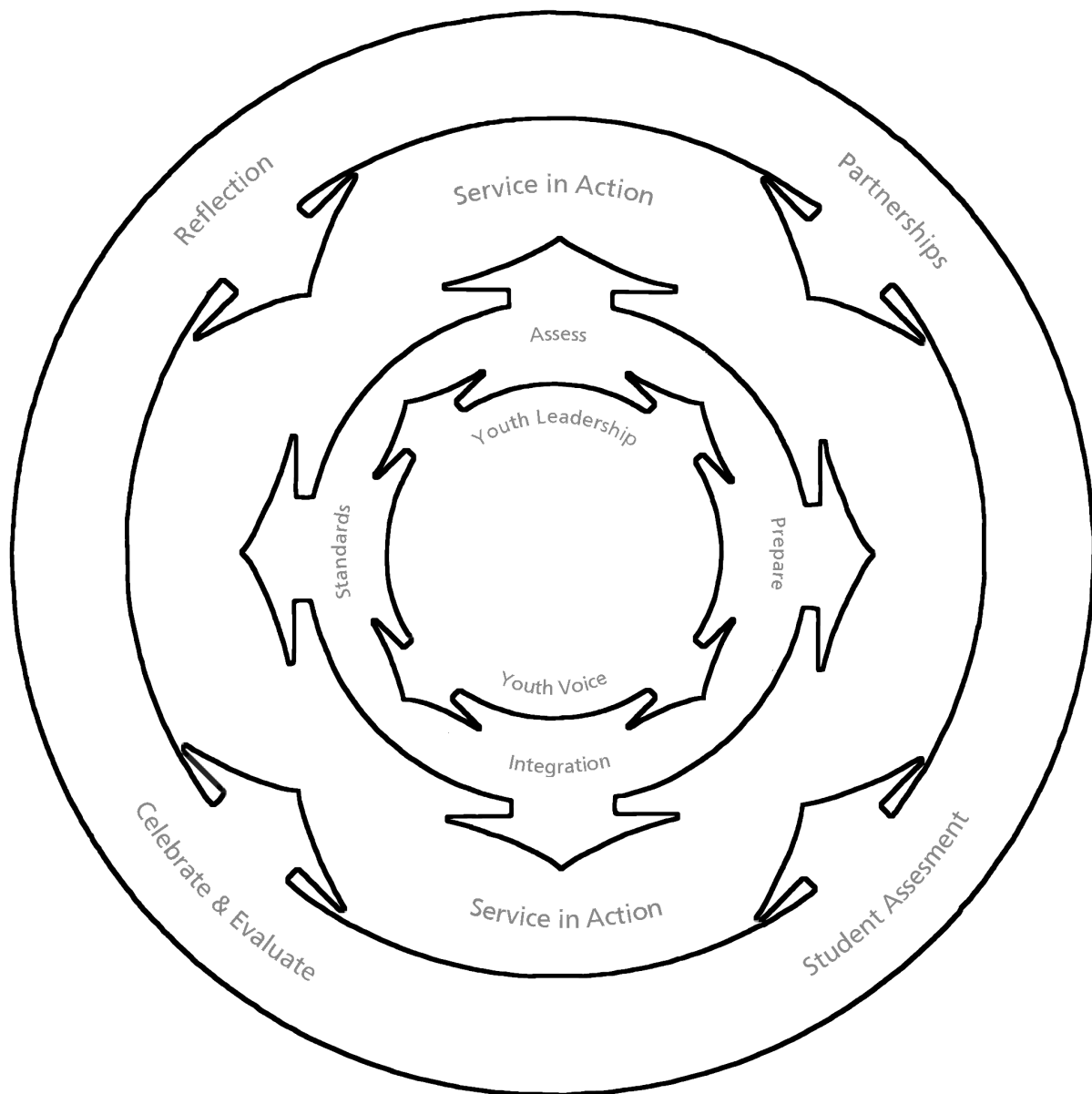
Be willing to inspire others with your ideas and initiatives.

And most importantly, **celebrate the power and possibility of young people to be leaders, educators, and activists for social justice.**

Service - Learning Life Cycle



Add notes and ideas to this copy of the service-learning life cycle as your project evolves



Real Needs: Assess your Community



PROFILE : Algebra Not Alcohol

In a scene in the video, *Marketing Booze to Blacks*, a man rolls white paint over a giant can of Colt 45 glaring out from a billboard as a crowd gathered below cheers. The sexually suggestive message next to the can, now half covered with fresh paint reads "It works every time." but what is working this time is this action taken by a coalition of community members to cleanse their neighborhood of one of the many billboards--they've counted

one every 188 feet--that clouds their view with images promoting alcohol and tobacco¹. Another billboard ad shows a minimally dressed Black woman riding a tiger towards a frosty can of Olde English Malt Liquor, bold text proclaiming "It is the Power." In Washington DC, a teacher and his students exercised the power of service to research and document the incidence of such billboards and other public advertisements in their own community. And, they learned algebra in the process.

The math classroom is often the last place to find service learning integrated in the curriculum. However, at Benjamin Banneker Academic High School, teacher Russell Jeter found a means to "extend [his students] mathematical skills outside of the classroom in order to help solve real community problems." To identify a potential service project, students brainstormed prevalent problems in their community and identified alcohol use as a pressing one. Jeter and his students wanted to delve beyond the typical "just say no" response and examine the social and political contexts that influence substance use and abuse. Jeter and Sarah Roma, an Americorps*VISTA member based in his school mapped out a plan to engage students in an investigation of "Alcohol in the Community." They hosted a speaker from the DC Community Prevention Partnership, who described a neighborhood survey process their organization used to determine alcohol influences on a community. Jeter and his algebra students adapted the Prevention Partnership survey. Clipboards in hand, their in-depth investigation of alcohol and tobacco related advertising, as well as algebra, began.

Groups of students, sometimes accompanied by a parent, pounded the pavement to examine the incidence of bars, liquor stores, billboards and other public advertisements for alcohol and tobacco in four DC neighborhoods. They recorded and counted their data on a sheet with categories such as "Stores with more than 50% advertising for alcohol and tobacco." A purpose of this community based research, says Jeter, was to "do some serious surveying to see if this was a relevant cause." Stu-

dents were also able to compare opposite ends of the city and get to know each others environments. They found, according to Jeter, that while students at Banneker are predominantly African American, there is a higher rate of advertising in some neighborhoods, and that not all of their neighborhoods have the same amount of bars and stores that serve liquor. Students simultaneously collected data on community resources such as health care, recreation facilities and human service agencies that counter substance abuse through positive options and support. They used their data to discuss findings that Blacks suffer disproportionately from health consequences of alcohol [and tobacco] such as cirrhosis of the liver and esophageal cancer, hypertension, malnutrition, and birth defects, and alcohol related acts of physical violence²

The data they collected became visual as they used linear algebra to graph their findings. By seeing the facts on paper and converted into mathematical data, says Jeter, it helped them to understand the issues and see how algebra skills could be relevant to their lives. As Catrell, a student at Banneker points out, "There are a lot of liquor stores and places you can buy alcohol around the school neighborhood. Alcohol has such a negative impact on our community. People don't know enough about prevention-oriented organizations. If people hear and see the facts, that is when they may do something." Jeter echoes this sentiment. "Information is not just supposed to be within the four walls of the classroom. I wanted this to be a revelation, so to speak, so that they could go back and educate people in their community and maybe close down one of these stores... take a real active role in making some positive changes." Some brought their realizations home. "Their Grandparents would say 'you are right, this thing has been going on for years, its just that you have taken it to another level.'"

Jeter used multiple means to assess student learning through this project. In addition to collecting accurate information and creating ratios and graphs from their data, students had to communicate the meaning and impact of their findings. The class put their knowledge into action as they wrote letters to several government officials illuminating their findings and feelings about the issue. Susan Duncan, Director of Service Learning at Community IMPACT!, a DC neighborhood and youth development organization, was impressed by the scientific approach the class took to investigating an authentic community need. Had time allowed, she suggests that the students could have spoken at a City Council meeting or published their results.

The Alcohol in the Community project is the result of a three way partnership in the DC schools: The Corporation for National Service provides support for Americorps*VISTA members, supervised by Community IMPACT!, who work with DC teachers and students to implement service learning initiatives. Catrell, who is taking his interest in health issues towards a career as a Neurosurgeon believes that service learning should start in grade school. He has found service a way to challenge stereotypes, his own and those of others. He offers an example from experience. "The elderly have their own impression of African American youth...[participation in service] can take away some of the negative publicity about youth in the nation and the negative aspects of how youth are portrayed in the media." His advice to others: "When you take that first step, others will follow. Service makes you more of a well rounded person and can help you to get back into your community."

Footnotes:

1 & 2 George Hacker, Ronald Collins, and Michael Jacobson. Marketing Booze to Blacks (video and report). Center for Science in the Public Interest, 1987

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Student involvement in the needs assessment process increases investment in the overall project and builds valuable inquiry and analytical skills.

The needs assessment process can be a tool to recognize and explore diverse neighborhoods within a community.

Parents and community members can share valuable experiential knowledge, and historical and current perspectives during the needs assessment stage and throughout a project.

Participatory action research can be a form of service in itself if it educates students and community members on important issues.

"OUR COMMUNITIES MUST BE THE SOURCES OF
THEIR OWN STRENGTH- POLITICALLY, ECONOMICALLY,
INTELLECTUALLY AND CULTURALLY IN THE
STRUGGLE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DIGNITY.
COMMUNITY...IS HOME AND IT IS POWER."

MALCOLM X, 1964 EL-HAJJ MALIK EL-SHABAZZ



QUESTIONS TO CONTEMPLATE

What are some current issues in our school, community, the nation and world related to cultural diversity, justice, or human and environmental health/safety?

What academic concepts or content needs more emphasis in our curriculum?

What interpersonal and cognitive skills do students need or want to develop?

What inquiry and research methods can be used to actively engage students in the needs assessment process?

What cultural experiences and knowledge do students individually and collectively possess, and how can these inform the needs assessment process?

How can the needs assessment process be designed in order to appeal to diverse learning styles?

ACTIVITY: NEEDS ASSESSMENT WALK

Developed by Deborah L. Habib and Margaret Collins

Purpose

This activity is designed to engage students in assessing their school/community in order to generate ideas for service learning projects that fulfill authentic needs. It also fosters multiple perspectives as students take on diverse community and career identities.

Materials and Resources

Index cards, each of which has written on it a different career or perspective. These might include: engineer, social worker, community planner, police officer, mother, person in a wheelchair, non-English speaker. A facilitator can generate these ahead of time, or they can be brainstormed by the group. You need one card for every two people in the class. It is okay if there are some duplicates.

Process

- A. Divide the group into pairs, and pass out the index cards, one to each pair. While the pair should keep the role named on the card to themselves for now, each pair should discuss their identity, approaching the facilitator if they are not clear on the identity or career written on their card.
- B. Explain that the group will take a short, 10-15 minute observation walk. This can be done within a school building, on the grounds, or around the neighborhood or nearby area in the community. It is best if the walk is actually taken, but if this is not possible, the facilitator can lead students on a guided imagery walk. Students should bring a pad or clipboard.

On the walk, each pair will assume the identity written on their card. Looking through the lens of their role, each pair will list and describe:

Two positive things they notice about the school or community.

Two needs or problems that they see.

- C. Return to the classroom. (This "debriefing " may need to happen during another session, depending on time constraints). Each pair discloses their identity and reports back, as someone lists the positive attributes on the board or newsprint. Another volunteer lists the needs or problems. Then, as a group, discuss and list the roots or causes of each of these needs/problems, as well as anything that is currently being done to address them. Next to the roots or causes of each problem, list some possible responses to remedy or address the problem or issue.

This list provides a springboard from which to further explore and choose an issue(s) to pursue through service learning.



Needs Assessment Walk

Discussion Questions (in class or as homework)

What constitutes a social or public issue?

Which of the issues identified are related to cultural diversity, justice, or human and environmental health/safety, and how?

Which of the issues identified are national or international in scope, as well as local?

How did the "identity" you assumed during the walk impact how you looked at the community, or the types of issues you noticed and identified?

ACTIVITY: INTERIOR DESIGN

Developed by Deborah Leta Habib

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to explore student's experiences of cultural inclusion or exclusion in school or in their community, and to identify cultural resources and knowledge that each student brings to the service learning process. Prior to the activity, it is important to have a discussion about what the word culture means to the group. Culture can include ethnic and racial identity, gender and sexual orientation, socio-economic class and religion, as well as popular culture identities that young people may affiliate with. A safe setting where students know they have the freedom to share aspects of themselves is critical for this activity.

Materials and Resources

Newsprint and markers/pens, tape, maps of the student's community or neighborhood, enlarged.

Process

- A. Divide the class into small groups of 4 or 5. Decide whether the class (or small groups) will focus on experiences in school, or experiences in their neighborhood or community. On a large piece of newsprint, a volunteer from each group draws an outline that represents the school, or, a shape that represents the community (an enlarged map of the neighborhood or community can also be used).

- B. Group members take turns responding to the following questions aloud, as others in the group list these as words, pictures or images *inside* of the outline of the school or community.

Describe a time that you felt your culture was respectfully acknowledged in school or in your community, by peers, teachers/administrators, neighbors, business people or politicians.

Describe a time you felt your culture was disrespected in school or in your community.

Describe a time you felt someone else's culture was either respected or disrespected in school or in your community.

- C. Next, on the perimeter of, or all around the outline, group members list and draw ways in which their culture enriches the school or community. When finished, each group can tape their drawing up on the wall or board. Then, a spokesperson from each group shares the drawing with the rest of the class. The class can continue the conversation and debrief using the discussion questions following.

Interior Design

Discussion Questions

Who can describe a time they responded to an incident of cultural disrespect or intolerance, directed towards their own or another's culture?

Did any needs or issues in the school or community arise through this activity that might make for a good service learning project?

How will the cultural experiences of the individuals in the class, as well as the group as a whole, enrich the service learning process? What might we be able to learn from each other?

Change not Charity: Prepare and Problem Solve



PROFILE:

A Design for Diversity

The Service Learning class at Highland Park Junior High is buzzing with six different animated conversations. At one table, students are designing a “don’t pollute” stencil that will be painted on storm sewers. Another group debates whether boycotting the GAP really helps child laborers. Teacher Martha Johnson has just directed a student to a milk-crate used to organize research materials when three students come hurriedly through the classroom door. “Ms. Johnson, the principal says we can’t do the mural!” In what Johnson later describes as “really only a fleeting moment” while racing from group to group, she asks the three-some “Well, did you ask him why?”

This group’s action plan involved painting a mural with words and images promoting Highland as a safe school for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) students, staff and families. The design for the mural had emerged after the students had discussed homophobic name-calling in their school, interviewed “out” gay and lesbian high school students about their struggles in junior high, and seen many of their teachers post “Safe Staff” signs on their doors. They assumed the principal had rejected their plan because it was too controversial. On Johnson’s suggestion, they headed out the door for the principal’s office once again, this time to learn more about why he said no, and see if they could reach a compromise. They learned that their principal supported their desire to educate the school community about heterosexism and the “Out-For-Equity/Safe Staff” initiative in the St. Paul schools, but was concerned about the permanency of paint, and that terms appropriate for today might be out-dated in a few years... yet the mural would still be on the wall

Re-invigorated, the students charged into the classroom one more time, where they quickly returned to the drawing board. The banner-like quilt that they came up with as an alternative was created using colorful fabric and paint. The phrase “honoring and celebrating diversity” borders a large pink triangle, and another with a rainbow of designs. The triangles, incorporated into the quilt to honor human rights, are symbols reclaimed from the Holocaust, when triangles of different colors were used to persecute Jews, Homosexuals, Roma (Gypsies), the disabled, and political activists. Parts of the student’s design were incorporated into a poster and a brochure, still used by the Out-For-Equity program, and shown as a model to other schools. The banner has hung in

several parts of the school, and served to promote conversation about what it means to have a school where everyone feels safe and respected.

Learning how to negotiate obstacles and forge creative solutions are an integral part of the public problem solving process that Johnson leads her students through in this service-learning class. At the beginning of the semester, a visitor might find students discussing consensus. Walk into the classroom a few days later and the walls will be covered with newsprint, the words “Issue-Problem-Project” at the top of several sheets. Your eyes scan multi-colored lists from the “Issues Framing” sessions, where student reporters have listed a plethora of “who, what and why” questions related to their chosen topic.

One objective in the course description reads “Students will use talents developed in school and elsewhere to participate in service projects inside and outside of school which are intergenerational, multicultural, disability and gender fair.” The talents and experiences that these students bring represent the diversity of their own experiences in a public school where over 20 languages are spoken; a school that provides initiatives and integration for students with learning differences and those who are without hearing. New talents are forged as part of the learning process. Some students have written and received grants to support service learning projects; others participate in the class a second year, this time as teaching assistants. This strategy helps Johnson with classroom management, and in one case, a mentor later got a job as a community organizer.

This project offers an example of how an exciting service learning initiative can be carried out within the school community—eliminating the need for expensive transportation and off-site logistics that can pose challenges to educators and administrators. Importantly, this process and project originated from actual incidents that students identified in their school —homophobic name calling—and the authentic need for, as Johnson says “some sort of public service announcement that says we are a school that doesn’t tolerate this.” Mary Tinucci, director of Out for Equity in the St. Paul Schools offered ideas for symbols to use on the banner to represent equity regarding GLBT issues. She also provided a social work intern to work with the students on the project. Tinucci says she was impressed with the student’s “openness and willingness to learn about the issue” and the completion of an artistic creation that “helped to break the silence at Highland Park Junior High about GLBT issues.”

Eugene Janicke, now an Area Assistant Superintendent, was the Principal at Highland Junior High who negotiated with the mural-turned-banner makers. In supporting projects such as this in one’s school, Janicke says administrators must be clear about what they are “willing to go to bat for” and that it is crucial to “work closely with the teacher—and trust that teacher’s judgment.” Janicke also notes the importance of bringing in multiple perspectives on issues, which provides balance and promotes critical thinking among students. Janicke recalls only one conversation with a parent who was concerned that the project was “promoting homosexual behaviors or lifestyles.” Janicke took the time to explain that it was part of a school-wide effort to teach tolerance and understanding and make the kids aware that “if they had questions, there were adults in the building,” those on the safe staff team, “who had some answers.”

Safe Schools policies are in place in several districts and states across the nation, enacted to support GLBT students and families, and educate others. A school based service-learning project such as this one demonstrates creativity in action as it affirms diversity. And, as a message on the banner reads, may help to “heal the hurts caused by hatred and fear.”

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

A problem-solving process is a critical learning stage that precedes and contributes to the success of the overall service learning experience.

Service projects may emerge and take on new shapes as students and teachers negotiate challenges.

Interactions with administrators, potential partners and allies in the initial stages of a project builds support and validity.

Effective service learning can take place without leaving the school grounds, especially when the preparation phase includes problem solving, collaboration and reflection.

"WE MUST BE THE CHANGE WE WISH TO SEE
IN THE WORLD"
MOHANDAS GANDHI

QUESTIONS TO CONTEMPLATE

Use the questions below as a framework to write a description of the service activities you will pursue, based on the results of your needs assessment.

How do the service activities we are proposing address the school or community needs we identified?

What are the overall goals of our project in regards to the social justice/multicultural issues addressed, impact on the school or surrounding community, and/or shifts in attitudes and understandings among participants and partners?

Where will the service activities take place?

What is the scope? e.g. hours per week, over what duration.

Who will be the population (or the place) that we will interact with through our service?

What do we need to know/learn about this population or place in preparation for service?

What are some of the logistics we need to work out? e.g. transportation, funds.

Who, in terms of allies, stakeholders and potential recipients, can we discuss the service learning project idea with before proceeding?

How is the ethnic and cultural make-up of the population that we will interact with through service similar to and different than the students/teacher in our class?

How is the neighborhood/community that we will interact with through service similar to and different from the neighborhoods/communities where we live?

How can we involve parents or other community members in the service (or preparation for service)?

What do we hope will be the outcomes (along the way) of the service learning process and experience?

What do we hope to learn about ourselves through this service-learning project?

What challenges might we have to navigate as we prepare for the service activities?

ACTIVITY: TAKE A STAND

Adapted by Deborah Leta Habib , original source unknown.

Purpose

Throughout the service learning process, participants will have many opportunities to discuss important issues and express opinions. The purpose of this activity is to express and reflect on perspectives and perceptions. It can be used at the beginning, middle, and end of a service learning project as a form of preparation as well as a tool for reflection. The statements used in the activity can change in order to elicit opinions and perspectives as they emerge throughout the process.

Materials and Resources

Five large pieces of paper, each with one of the following written in bold magic marker: Strongly Agree, Agree, Still Thinking, Disagree, Strongly Disagree. A ball of string (or chalk if you are outside). A list, or cards with several statements related to the social justice issue that is at the root of your service learning project. These can reflect multiple perspectives on the issue. These can be written by a teacher or facilitator, or students can take an active role in writing these before-hand, perhaps as a homework assignment, extracting them from an article or essay related to the issue you are exploring.

Process

- A. A teacher or student sets up the activity by creating a line that will be long enough for all of the participants to stand on. Give it a slight curve, so that people will be able to see each other while on the line. Place the five pieces of paper at equal intervals along the line, with Strongly Agree at one end, and Strongly Disagree at the other.
- B. Explain that a sentence will be read, and participants will “take a stand” along the continuum, choosing a spot that represents their opinion on this topic. They might stand exactly on or near one of the pieces of paper, or, between two, for example, “still thinking” and “agree.”
- C. Read one of the statements aloud, encouraging participants to take a few minutes to think about their opinion before choosing a position on the continuum. Participants should do this quietly, without conferring with others. For example, depending on the issue you are addressing, a statement might be:

Students and teachers in our school are very inclusive of people with disabilities. or,

Child labor doesn’t really impact people in the United States. or,

The lot next to our school would be a good spot to build low-income housing.

- D. Once all participants have taken a position, ask for volunteers along different points in the continuum to express why they chose to stand where they did. Participants should listen to each other's opinions at this point, rather than engage in dialogue. However, facilitators should be attentive to comments so they can be addressed afterwards as necessary.
- E. Once several people have shared opinions, propose that if anyone would like to change their position on the continuum they can do so. Ask those who moved to share why they did; what comments and opinions caused them to rethink their position?

Repeat the same process with other statements, or save these for another session.

Discussion Questions

Facilitators should take cues, and generate discussion questions from the comments and opinions expressed in the activity. In addition, ask:

Was it easy or difficult to decide where to stand on the line? What information/experiences did you use to form an opinion?

How did it feel to hear opinions expressed that were different from your own?

How might the opinions expressed compare or contrast with those held by the people we encounter during our service project?

Community as Textbook: Curriculum Integration



PROFILE:

Learning from a Legacy

In rural Ottawa County in North Eastern Oklahoma, the high school students that are part of the Cherokee Volunteers have organized a fish tournament at Tar Creek. Community members arrive on the day of the event, but without fishing poles. Most know that you can not fish in Tar Creek because there are no fish. Instead, they are led on a "Toxic Tour" of the lead leaching chat piles and abandoned mine shafts that have rendered much of this community an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Superfund Site and resulted in students at Miami High School understanding the term environmental racism, and that they, many of whom are Cherokee or Quapaw, are targets of it.

Environmental racism refers to the inequitable dumping of toxins in communities of color, and the poor or working poor, and the inadequate clean-up of these communities. Environmental Justice is the movement that has risen from within these communities, to educate and bring public attention to atrocities such as the devastated landscape and declining human health in the region surrounding Tar Creek. Although most of the scientific testing of Tar Creek is too hazardous for students to be directly involved in, counselor Rebecca Jim and students at Miami High School have worked to understand the local ecosystem, and develop science skills as well as tools for activism.

Mary, a former student now at the local community college gained career direction through teaching elementary school students about Tar Creek, and organizing in her community. "I've been a real quiet person a lot of my life...it really helped me find my voice. It really helped me reach out to people and want to stand up in front of a group of people and try to explain to them what is going on." Mary and others developed community outreach materials like the Cherokee Volunteer Society's "Options for Your Solid Waste," a brochure that offers suggestions for creative and safe disposal of everything from eyeglasses to radiators. On a national level, Rebecca Jim and the Cherokee Volunteers present the Tar Creek Issues Conference that draws scientists, citizens and students from across the nation. Participants at this two day conference that culminates with a Native American traditional dinner attend workshops like "Unfunded Superfund Sites on Tribal Lands" and "Lead, Nutrition and Pregnancy," as well as a panel discussion on service learning by Miami High teachers and students.

A recent book signing celebrated “The Legacy” an anthology of poetry, prose, songs and research by students and teachers at Miami High School with the support of Nancy Scott, Director of the Cherokee Nation Learn and Serve Program. Some of the writing was done in Judy David’s English class. In addition to research and writing on local environmental issues, students in David’s class read Henrik Ibsen’s *An Enemy of the People*. “Although it takes place over 100 years ago, and in Norway” says David, “the students can make comparisons to the main character in the story who tries to tell the people the truth” about contaminated springs in their Norwegian village. The character is ostracized so as not to inhibit profits to be made from the supposedly curative springs. David recalls “We talked about whether they would put a landfill in a town with more doctors and lawyers—absolutely not—so then, well why can they get away with these things here?”

In Ottawa County, Oklahoma, students and dedicated community members have persevered beyond the pollution of denial to bring attention to Tar Creek through education and action. Until 1997, Tar Creek, a Superfund Site since 1983 with a toxicity rating higher than that of Love Canal, was largely ignored by the federal and local government. But, along with people like Earl Hatley, Environmental Director for the Quapaw Tribe and seasoned community organizer, and Rebecca Jim, school counselor and mentor to many, students have brought local and national attention to Tar Creek and developed environmental literacy and political know-how in the process.

Jason's knowledge of the issues and passion for change is evidenced in his essay in *The Legacy*. "The leaves, and other parts of the plants [along the banks of Tar Creek] that should be green are orange due to the massive pollution of the water and surrounding land. The acid mine water that pollutes Tar Creek has seeped into the underground water supply. This includes the water supply for my community as well as the water supply of all the surrounding communities. We have pregnant ladies, small children, fathers, brothers and sisters drinking this polluted water. The percentage of people in this area with lead poisoning is well above the normal. Many people have suffered brain damage while others have learning disabilities. So you can see, we have a major problem on our hands. After taking all of this into consideration. I strongly urge every person to try and make a difference. Contact your state representatives, the governor, our mayor, and tell them what you think about the situation with Tar Creek. There is an old saying that things have to get worse before they get better. I do not believe this!"

Community as Textbook: Curriculum Integration



PROFILE :

How Would You Feel?

As Jillian walks out of her apartment and heads down the street, she passes two teenage guys who turn to cruelly taunt her for the physical disability that impacts her movement. As she turns to face them, the viewer of this video feels both her dignity and pain. The camera pans to Willie, an African American young man who conveys Jillian's feelings

through rap lyrics. A young woman joins him and harmonizes with the refrain "How would you feel if it happened to you, if you walked in their shoes would you have different views?" Another scene in the video re-creates Willie's own story of being grabbed by a policeman who wants to check his backpack as he leaves a sandwich shop with his lunch. Incensed, he sings "I said listen man, I don't sell crack, I stopped at the store to get me a snack."

"How would you feel" repeats melodically in the background throughout this video of the same name, as viewers witness dramatizations of real events experienced by these and other students from Rutherford High School in Panama City, Florida. The idea for this video was suggested by Jillian, the young woman who portrays her encounter with intolerance in the opening scene.

"How Would You Feel?" is one of many videos created by students in the television production classes in the Communications and Technology Academy at Rutherford High. Beverley Fraser teaches six sections of the class, and each section produces a video to educate their school community about current issues or cultural diversity. The process is both curriculum and student driven. Team teaching helps to foster an interdisciplinary focus in the Communications/Technology (Com-Tech) career-tract at Rutherford High. As Fraser explains, sometimes video topics will be driven by an academic unit. Students study, for example, the Civil Rights Movement or women in history in their social studies class. Then they create an accompanying video in the television production class. To generate ideas for videos, Fraser might also have students brainstorm topics related to current interests or concerns, then develop several from this list as a homework assignment. Then, students work in small groups to refine their ideas. "How Would you Feel?" evolved in this manner, as did a video on teenage suicide developed in response to several such tragedies in their community.

After deciding on a topic, the students conduct research and lay out story-boards.

"The whole thing is planned out before we pick up a camera" says Fraser, which explains the professional quality of the videos. Each student has a role in the planning, filming and editing processes. The videos are played in all classes at Rutherford High as part of the morning announcements. Sometimes teachers within the school, other districts or even other states, as is the case with "How Would You Feel?" request copies to help stimulate class discussions. An English class wrote a group letter to the student producers. In this letter, according to Fraser, one student shared that his father is disabled and has to deal with similar attitudes all of the time. "How Would You Feel?" is still used as a tool to address incidents that arise in the school related to intolerance.

Rutherford High School's population, which draws from suburban and a small urban community, is approximately 30% students of color, including Egyptian, Vietnamese, African American, and Latino. The videos help to promote cross-cultural understanding among students and staff. Marcus recently worked on a video to educate students about Ramadan, the month of fasting observed by Muslims. Marcus, who is African American and Christian, became interested in Muslim culture through discussion in a history class. He joined the school's ISLAM (Interested Students Learn About Muslim) club to learn more. Says Marcus, "I had stereotypes about the scarf that women wear over their head, like 'why do you wear that?' I didn't understand. And marriage, like how many people you are allowed to marry, stuff like that. I learned that it is a choice to wear a scarf, and that in fact they only marry one person." In the Ramadan video, students pose questions about Islamic culture and religion, then a Muslim student responds.

When creating videos that promote cultural awareness, Marcus advises "make sure you know what you are talking about...get people from that culture together, talk to them so you have accurate information. You have to understand where they are coming from [in order for viewers] to get a better understanding." The process of producing videos can increase understanding of one's own ethnic heritage. Ornella, whose family is from Spain says "I'm Hispanic, but doing research, I learned a lot more about Hispanic cultures" as she worked with Puerto Rican, Mexican, and non-Latino peers. This and other videos were incorporated into displays at the school's International Festival. In addition to creating educational videos to broadcast over their own school's closed circuit TV network, Com-Tech students engage in service learning as they intern in elementary and feeder schools. They work with younger students to develop morning announcements, teach editing skills, and help with technology problems.

The Com-Tech students are together in the same classes for three years, which fosters honest discussion and reflection about projects and service activities. Fraser has her students do self evaluations at the end of each semester that describe what they were most proud of as well as "what they didn't do but wished they had" She incorporates their self-assessments to calculate their grades. Rutherford students use their communication and media skills as a powerful means of educating others about current issues and cultural diversity in their community. But Fraser emphasizes that "you don't need to have a lot of technology...there are some relatively simple projects. Look for a cable company to partner with, or write and illustrate children's story books."

Whatever communication medium, Fraser notes the importance of meaningful projects that help service participants and recipients come to realizations "without adults pointing a finger and telling them how to feel or act." She has observed that those coming out of college with media-related careers do not often get at "the ethical issues." Her students seem likely to enter college and careers with both technical skills and awareness of social issues. Ornella plans to major in journalism. "Rutherford is really lucky to have this program," she says. "We learn a lot and we get professional experience. When I get into a real career, I'll be prepared."

RUTHERFORD HIGH SCHOOL IS A NATIONAL SERVICE LEADER SCHOOL

"IN TWELVE YEARS OF SCHOOL, I NEVER
STUDIED ANYTHING ABOUT MYSELF"

AFRICAN AMERICAN YOUNG WOMAN QUOTED IN
"HOW SCHOOLS SHORTCHANGE GIRLS,"
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN, 1992

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Content matter related to a project can be integrated across many subjects in the curriculum.

A service learning approach can support the authentic integration of multicultural and social justice topics into the academic curriculum, as opposed to an occasional extra-curricular add-on model.

Social justice/multicultural topics and related service learning projects can make for excellent team teaching units.

Students who do not often excel academically may become more engaged and successful when content is relevant to their lives and the approach to pedagogy inclusive of multiple learning styles.

QUESTIONS TO CONTEMPLATE

What academic concepts or content will be emphasized through our service learning experience?

What hands-on, interpersonal, and cognitive, and analytical skills can be practiced through our service learning experience?

How can students be involved in shaping the classroom lessons/unit?

How can student's cultural knowledge inform and enhance the classroom lessons connected to this service learning experience?

How can community knowledge and resources, such as speakers, enhance the classroom lessons?

How will classroom lessons/activities be structured in order to appeal to diverse learning styles?

How will multiple perspectives on the issues at hand be introduced and examined (through speakers, readings, media)?

ACTIVITY: CURRICULUM WEB

Purpose

This activity engages a class or a teaching team in generating and documenting ideas for curriculum integration. The web serves as a visual account of classroom preparation and explorations connected to your project. Plus, students add their questions to the web, fostering inquiry and reflection throughout the process.

Materials

A very large piece of posterboard, or bulletin board. Markers, glue, post-its, other craft supplies.

Process

This activity can be done once a service learning topic and project idea has been initiated, in order to elicit existing student knowledge, to recap what the class has done so far, and to generate more ideas for connecting service to the curriculum. It can be created by students in one class, or by a teaching team in order to elicit cross curricular possibilities.

- A. Begin the web by writing the issue/topic that you are responding to through your service learning project in a circle in the middle of the posterboard. Have students generate words or concepts associated with the topic and write some of these around the circle. For example, if the web was being created by the students and teachers in Learning from a Legacy, "Pollution of Tar Creek" might be at the center. Words generated might include environmental racism, health, Quapaw land, no fish, and abandoned coal mines.
- B. Next, draw or use string to make spokes that radiate out from the center circle. At the end of each spoke, make a circle. In each of these circles, write down a curricular activity or exploration that the class is pursuing. In the Learning from a Legacy web, one circle might include 'Read Enemy of the People,' and in another, 'Research land-fill regulations,' or 'Learn about Superfund history from guest speaker.' You can also add academic concepts and skills learned through the experience to each spoke. As various curricular activities are pursued in preparation for service, add these, making more spokes as necessary.
- C. Add dates to the various spokes to document when the activities were carried out, or date some in advance as a planning tool. As activities are planned and carried out, the group can add photos or drawings to turn the web into a collage of sorts. As you discuss or debrief each curricular activity, students can generate questions on small pieces of paper or post-its, and add these to the web. These questions may lead to new activities, or even ideas for future service learning projects! In addition to serving as a visual classroom reminder of the learning possible through service-learning, the web can be used to show others in your school or community how you link service to the curriculum.

The Missing Link: Connect to Standards

Philadelphia classroom © Dan Habib



PROFILE: Equity.com

As students changed classes one day at Malcolm Shabazz City High School in Madison, Wisconsin, they passed a veritable garden of technology strewn about the central area in their school.

Lacking a lab, Tina Murray and

her students had chosen this spot to disassemble an assortment of old computers and put them back together. Screwdrivers still in hand, groups of students sat circled around extracted circuit boards, memory and disk drives, hunched forward for closer inspection. These particular machines would likely head for a computer graveyard in the name of experimentation. But others would soon be repaired by the hands of the ECAP (Equity in Computer Access Project) students, and donated to families throughout Madison, a local community center, and a support network for people with disabilities.

The class is a hands-on, service oriented approach to narrowing the Digital Divide, the term used to describe findings that race, ethnicity and socioeconomic class are all likely factors in determining who has access to computers, the Internet, and therefore information. Kathy, an ECAP student explains, "if people don't know anything about computers, they don't get the jobs that would pay more money, that would let them be able to buy computers."

The initial need to increase access to technology arose within the school community. Students at this public alternative high school saw that because they had less funding than other schools, they had fewer resources. "They would go to other high schools and see a brand new lab," says Murray, the technology teacher at the school. "They started talking about what was fair and what was not fair. Meanwhile, the Internet was being touted as a resource for everyone." The students did an informal poll in classes. They asked who had computers at home, who needed to go to the public library and whose family had the resources to buy a computer. They found that only 18% of students in their school had easy access to a computer. For many, the thought of having to research and type a paper by a deadline was overwhelming. As the students digested their data, Murray's questions helped her class move from issue to action: "Now you know what the problem is and what the scope of it is...what are you going to do about it?" Five students who were especially invested in the issue wrote

letters to 100 businesses and organizations asking for old equipment, money or technical expertise. They ended up with 15 computers and 700 dollars, and ECAP was launched.

The ECAP class has had a special impact on girls. One of the initial recipients of computers was the "Girl Neighborhood Power" group at a local community center, but the young women in the ECAP class have been changed as well through their service. As Tina Murray describes, "We were sitting in the classroom with all this stuff on the floor, and they said 'well what do you want us to do' and I said I want you to put it back together. They just looked at me and some said 'I don't think I can do that do that...' especially the girls. Society still gives girls the idea that they aren't supposed to get involved in how things work. Later, when I asked them what the most remarkable moment of the class was, they talk about this transition from not knowing and being fearful to knowing and feeling more confident. It is a sense of personal capability on their part and that shows through everything else they do."

Becky remembers the time a recipient came to pick up a computer. "I got to help him load it into his car and he asked me what he needed to do to put in a disc drive and I remember thinking it was interesting for a grown man to be asking a teenager for advice." She also strengthened a family connection as a result of the class "My dad messes around a lot at home [with computers] and I didn't do much with it before. He thought it was really cool that I was putting these computers out into the community and that we could have that bond."

Service learning is not new to Malcolm Shabazz City High School, thanks to the enthusiasm of a school community guided by Jane Hammatt Kavaloski, social worker and service learning coordinator at the school. The ECAP initiative complements courses like Amnesty International, where English students study the work of this organization and practice writing and advocacy skills. In Women's Issues In Our Society, Shabazz students mentor middle school girls and conduct an educational campaign during Sexual Assault Week. Reflection is embedded in each initiative. Critical questions raised before, during and after service experiences can, as Hammatt Kavaloski suggests, move students from a charity orientation to a social justice orientation. Through talking writing and media, Shabazz students examine the "root causes of societal problems" and, as modeled through the ECAP efforts to equalize access to technology, explore ways that young people "can become part of the solution."

MALCOLM SHABAZZ CITY HIGH SCHOOL IS A NATIONAL SERVICE LEADER SCHOOL

Key Considerations

Service learning projects can enhance many academic subjects, including technology and the sciences, while promoting human interaction and social responsibility.

Links to subject and required curriculum standards can be made through most any project with a little creativity.

Service-learning projects with a social justice and multicultural orientation often address district or state curriculum standards related to character education, citizenship, or social responsibility.

Projects may support the mission of a school, and enhance the "informal curriculum," or overall climate by fostering individual and collective self esteem, collaboration, and respect for diversity.

QUESTIONS TO CONTEMPLATE

Which curriculum standards can be explicitly met through our service learning experience?

Which can be implicitly addressed?

Which state or district curriculum standards that imply exploration of justice, human rights, cultural understanding, citizenship, or social responsibility can be met through this service learning initiative?

What will we say to an administrator, colleague, parent or student who asks how this project meets district and state curriculum requirements?

ACTIVITY: FRAMEWORKS BINGO

Developed by Deborah L. Habib and Margaret Collins

Purpose

This activity is an entertaining way to demonstrate how service learning and social justice/multicultural education initiatives meet learning standards in your district or state. Students can use it to recognize how their project is connected to curriculum goals, but it is especially useful to demonstrate these connections to parents, administrators and other teachers.

Materials

A Bingo Board (see process below) for each player; A list of pre-selected curriculum frameworks (from one or several subjects) for your state or district, including the subject and reference number as it is listed for your state e.g. LA (Language Arts) 1.4, and grade level for each.

Process

- A. Create the Bingo Board with your students, colleagues or partners involved in the initiative. You can do this by hand on graph paper, or on the computer, but the grid for the board should be five squares across, five squares down, on a standard 8.5 x11 piece of paper.
- B. Generate a list of the various preparation, reflection, assessment, and service activities connected to your initiative(s), keeping the wording as concise as possible. For example, a list from the ECAP project described in the profile in this section might include: Research the Digital Divide, Develop Project Budget, Graph Computer Use by Socio-Economic Status, Write Article about ECAP for Local Paper, Discuss Role of Women in Technology Careers. Fill in the Bingo Boards with the various activities such as those above, one per square, in random placement. Make 4 or 5 slightly different boards, by varying the placement of activities on the grid. Then, make copies of the boards, enough for the size of the group that will play frameworks bingo. So, if you will have 20 players, make 5 copies each of the 4 different boards.
- C. To Play: Pass out the boards. Allow players a few minutes to familiarize themselves with their boards. Explain that the facilitator will read a curriculum standard and accompanying code number aloud. Each player must try to make a connection between that standard and one of the activities on their board. If they can do so, they write the code number on that square on their board. For example, The facilitator reads LA 1.4: "Students will develop vocabulary related to science and technology." One player marks the square on their grid that reads "Write Article about ECAP for Local Paper" with LA 1.4. Another player may mark the square "Discuss Role of Women in Technology Careers." The facilitator continues to read from the pre-selected list of frameworks, and players mark their boards, trying to make connections as well as Bingo: 5 across, vertically, or diagonally. When a player calls Bingo, they must read back the connections they made, and if not clear, articulate how they are making this connection between framework and activity. The rest of the group (not

only the facilitator) can [playfully] approve or disapprove the connection made, which makes for good discussion! Continue to play until you have 2-3 winners.

Notes:

Players can only mark one square per framework

It can be helpful to allow players to view the frameworks as they are being read aloud, by projecting them on an overhead screen, but only uncover one framework at a time!

Feel free to make up your own or amend these rules.

Prizes add to the fun! Winners might receive a service learning pamphlet, or something related to the project, like 10 minutes of free computer advice from an ECAP student!

